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ABSTRACT

Public higher education's use of a policy/regulation (P/R) manual system, a mechanism for providing information, was investigated. Attention was directed to the following concerns: the prevailing judgment of higher education authorities regarding the value of a P/R manual system; whether it is general practice to employ a P/R manual system in public higher education; reasons offered by administrators who do not employ such a system; characteristics and features that are required for an effective system; and the activities and programs recommended by authorities to foster the use of P/R manual systems. Checklist responses were obtained from 24 higher education association executives, 61 higher education authorities and state coordinating agency executive officers, and 81 higher education administrators and state governing board executive officers. Findings include the following: the prevailing judgment of authorities was that a P/R manual system is a beneficial mechanism that promotes effective governance in higher education; the system can facilitate communication, provide guidelines for due process, expedite decision making, and promote high personnel morale; and P/R manuals have frequently been ineffective. (SW)

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# Use of a Policy/Regulation Manual System in Public Higher Education

by

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## INTRODUCTION

In the operation and governance of complex societal organizations, it has long been believed essential that all persons have ready access to accurate current information on the governing policies and regulations with which they are expected to comply. To a greater or lesser extent and in a better or poorer fashion, all societal organizations do something about communications and providing relevant information. This study is concerned with what public colleges and universities do with the mechanism for providing information which is called a policy/regulation manual system.

## COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION SYSTEMS in BUSINESS

In business and industry the use of P/R manuals as a basic component of the information and communication system is well established. The Manual Corporation of America "specializes in designing, developing, writing, and maintaining manuals, guidebooks, handbooks." Since 1964 when the Manual Corporation of America was established, "over 3,000 companies, banks, hospitals, government agencies, and all types of organizations" have turned to the MCA for assistance and direction.

The following are several of the associations with special interest in communication and information systems in business and government:

American Business Communication Association

Association for Systems Management

Association of Records Managers and Administrators

International Association of Business Communicators

International Information/Word Processing Association

National Association of Government Communicators

Society for Technical Communication

COMMUNICATION and INFORMATION SYSTEMS in HIGHER EDUCATION

Although practice has varied a great deal, the need for effective communication and information systems in higher education has been recognized in the literature. Saunders[1] made the point that to a large extent, American higher education "is characterized by a participative style of management." Governance is "shared by faculty committees, faculty-administration task forces, faculty senates, governing bodies, committees of deans, affiliated department chairmen, and advisory groups." The conclusion of Glynton Smith[2] was:

> In participative management, sharing the same basic set of information about an institution with administrators, faculty, students, and governing bodies becomes critical.

Within recent years a majority of the public colleges and universities have been grouped into systems with each system under the general control of a single board. The result, said Bergdahl,[3] is that "many critical decisions that used to be made on the single campus are now made elsewhere." Of course, each campus unit of a system should have full information on the general policies and regulations applicable to all campus units. The growth of multi-campus systems has made the need for effective information and communication systems even more urgent in public higher education.

Viola[4] is emphatic about the value of manuals and handbooks:

> In short, they are vital instruments of internal communication—academic bibles for faculty, staff, and students alike. If a faculty member wants to review an institution's tenure policy, if a student wishes to know a school's disciplinary procedures, or if a prospective employee wants information relative to the university's employee tuition policy, a good handbook is invaluable, a poor handbook is inexcusable, and no handbook at all is intolerable.

According to James:[5]

> It is the practice of most institutions to have the document containing the constitution, bylaws, and regulations revised and printed annually and distributed to all faculty members. Such a document—usually bearing a title such as The Handbook, The Blue Book, The Gray Book, etc.—becomes the "bible" for the institution's faculty.

The Executive Director of the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association wrote:

> Through the evaluation process, we often assist institutions in developing or improving their P/R manuals....Our evaluation criteria provide useful guidelines for P/R manuals.

The following passages are quoted from the accreditation standards of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools:

> Internal communication is paramount to promote and sustain good working relations and healthy institutional morale. Systematic and continuous efforts must be devoted to maintaining the flow of essential information to and from all parties concerned with an institution's welfare....
>
> ...Channels for communication and consultation with all of the institution's constituencies, and especially the faculty and students, are essential.

While the Middle States Association statement calls for effective communication, it does not specify how the vital communication is to be accomplished. The Southern Association[7] is more definite:

> Published by-laws of the board (governing) and formalized faculty manuals are strongly recommended....These or similar official documents should contain the following information:
>
> (a) The duties and responsibilities of the chief administrative officers,
>
> (b) the pattern of faculty organization,
>
> (c) statements governing tenure and related procedures and all other policies and regulations that affect the members of the faculty, the members of the administrative staff, or other college personnel.

The American Association of University Professors[8] has recommended that governance procedures be carefully edited, codified, and accessible:

> A well-organized institution will reflect sympathetic understanding by trustees and teachers alike of their respective and complementary roles. These should be spelled out carefully in writing and made available to all.

In the "Statement on Government of Colleges and Universities" approved in 1967, the American Association of University Professors[9] declared:

> One of the governing board's important tasks is to ensure the publication of codified statements that define the over-all policies and procedures of the institution under its jurisdiction.

The Directors of the American Council on Education voted that this statement was "a significant step forward in the clarification of the respective roles of governing boards, faculties and administrations" and commended it to member institutions. The same action was taken by the Executive Committee of the Association of Governing Boards.[10]

The accreditation requirements of the Connecticut Board of Higher Education include the provision that personnel policies "shall be codified and available to faculty members.[11]"

PREVIOUS RESEARCH on P/R MANUALS in HIGHER EDUCATION

There has been little research on the use of policy/regulation manuals in higher education. In his treatise on College Administration and the Faculty Handbook, Long[12] commented on "the few publications that relate to the subject."

Frederic C. Kintzer,[13] who studied junior college faculty handbooks for several years in the 1960s reported that "so little has been written regarding them." Of fifteen references which he reviewed regarding faculty, only one was "directly concerned with junior college publications. The others dealt with staff manuals for elementary and secondary schools." Kintzer[14] continued his study and several years later made a similar observation:

> While considerable attention in the literature on written communication is given to the preparation of manuals, practically all of it pertains to business and industrial bulletins. Comparatively little material is published on handbooks for teachers.

In 1961, Kintzer[15] published a study based on the analysis of the faculty handbooks published by fifty-one California public community colleges. The method of study was to tabulate the topics included in the handbooks. According to Kintzer, the faculty handbook contains a variety of material selected for its value to the teaching staff. It is more limited in purpose and content than the P/R manual. The faculty handbook "is properly less formal and more readable than the board policy manual...."

Kintzer concluded that the fifty-one faculty handbooks were highly "individualistic documents" varying in length from 23 to 115 pages. All but two handbooks were mimeographed. Kintzer's tabulation of topics included showed the total of 116 different topics. The topics included, however, varied greatly. Only thirty-eight topics were found in as many as half of the handbooks and only ten in three-fourths or more....Kintzer[16] concluded:

> The faculty handbook, is in general, accepted as a worthwhile publication by administrators and writers in the field. Significantly, Kintzer added: It is, however, of little value unless used by the faculty. In all too many instances, it is feared, the handbook—an expensive and complex document to produce—gathers dust on office bookshelves. Administrators and committee members responsible for the development of this publication should be alert to factors which impede the usefulness of the faculty manual and to initiate corrective measures.

In 1962, Miller and Wilson[17] included use of the faculty handbook in a survey of faculty development procedures. Data were obtained from 228 colleges. About two-thirds of the respondents reported that they had faculty handbooks.

Kintzer[18] also made a study of board policy manuals. In 1962, Kintzer reported "that interest in the formulation and statement of board policies is gaining momentum in districts supporting junior colleges in California." His report is based on an analysis of twenty-three board policy manuals for

California districts having junior colleges. Like the faculty handbooks, Kintzer found that the board policy manuals "are highly individualistic - reflecting the personality of the community served." 263 topics were included in one or more of the twenty-three manuals. Only thirty-eight topics are included in half and only eight in three-fourths of the manuals.

In 1962, Dr. Archie R. Ayers, Specialist in College and University Administration, United States Office of Education made a study in which he found that there was a wide variation in the use of P/R manuals in colleges and universities. So far as Dr. Ayers knows, his study was the only one of its kind that has been done. Dr. Ayers has informed this writer that additional research is needed.

Several years later (1965), Kintzer[19] made another study of faculty handbooks published by public junior colleges. He again tabulated the topics included in forty-four faculty handbooks. He found that these handbooks had become "more comprehensive" and "discuss a larger number of topics in greater detail." There was increasing standardization as evidenced by heavy use of quotations from the California Administrative Code in twenty-seven of the handbooks. Kintzer concluded that "the faculty handbook has established itself as an indispensable tool...." In some colleges, however, the faculty handbook appeared to have been abandoned "in favor of a single publication — a policy manual."

Long[20] made an analysis and study of eighty-six faculty handbooks which had been obtained as the result of a request to 115 colleges and universities. Sixty-six (76.74 per cent) indicated the use of handbooks or equivalent publications. In addition, fourteen institutions reported that a handbook was in preparation.

The review of previous research has led to this observation: The research done on the use of manuals and handbooks in higher education has consisted primarily of the tabulation and analysis of published manuals and handbooks. While this research has much value, it has limitations.

Tabulations of the contents of handbooks and manuals have not provided evidence on effectiveness of use or the necessary conditions for effective use. Long[21] made the observation that publication of procedures is fundamental, but publication does not assure effective use.

> Although the faculty handbook has valuable potential as an administrative instrument, its utility and value may be compromised or rendered useless by a variety of abuses.

Research is needed that goes beyond tabulation of the content of manuals and handbooks published, if abuses which result in ineffective use of P/R manuals are to be addressed and corrected.

## OBJECTIVES of the PRESENT RESEARCH

To Determine:

The prevailing judgement of authorities in the field of higher education regarding the value of a policy/regulation manual system.

Whether it is general practice to employ a P/R manual system in public higher education.

The reasons offered by administrators of public higher education institutions which do not employ a policy/regulation manual system.

Characteristics and features that are required for an effective P/R manual system.

The activities and programs recommended by authorities in the field of higher education to foster the use of policy/regulation manual systems.

## RESEARCH METHODS

Review of published literature and microfiche material.

Data gathered by a mail survey employing specially prepared checklists. with provision for comments.

Additional data obtained by telephone interviews and correspondence with selected respondents.

A CAVEAT

This research is limited to the above stated objectives. To achieve these objectives is a project which can make a valuable contribution to public higher eduction. There was no intent nor was any effort made in the present research to evaluate policies and regulations that have been established by due process for any institution. Thus, it is not within the purview of this research to attempt to determine whether established policies and regulations are beneficial and reasonable or arbitrary and counter-productive. Such determination, of course, is of great importance, but it is beyond the scope of the present research.

DATA SOURCES

Higher education association executives.

Higher education authorities:

Authors, researchers, professors of higher education.
State Higher Education Executive Officers (Coordinating)

Administrators of higher education

Executive officers of institutions of higher education
State Higher Education Executive Officers (Governing)

Requests for Data and Responses

A careful effort was made to obtain data constituting an adequate sample of current practice in the use of P/R manuals in public higher education. In all, checklists were sent with requests for cooperation to 284 persons who on the basis of their experience and accomplishments can be considered knowledgeable in the area of higher education. Signed responses were received from 166 persons (64% of those solicited).

The data provided by the checklist items and the personal comments written by so many of the respondents were further supplemented by numerous telephone conversations and correspondence.

Distribution of Checklists and Responses

| Data Source | Checklists Distributed | Responses Received |
|---|---|---|
| Higher education association executives | 34 | 24 |
| Higher Education Authorities<br>Authors, researchers, professors of higher education<br>State Higher Education Executive Officers (Coordinating Agencies) | 76 | 61 |
| Administrators of Higher Education<br>Executive officers of higher education institutions<br>State Higher Education Executive Officers (Governing Boards) | 174 | 81 |
| Totals | 284 | 166 |
| Per cents | 100 | 64 |

Data Request Format and Supplementary Comments

For the convenience of the educators whose cooperation was solicited, a checklist format was employed which could be completed merely by checking items. Written comments were not required. A special checklist was devised for each of the three groups of respondents - higher education association executives, the higher education authorities and the administrators of higher education institutions. As anticipated, some respondents took the trouble to make supplementary written comments.

The comments, notes, and letters which respondents wrote voluntarily have been a data source of considerable importance. The views expressed are candid and insightful. Each writer has drawn on extensive professional experience to make available valuable personal perceptions. That a number of the respondents who are busy executives took the time to express their views says something very admirable about their professionalism. The research report which follows includes a number of quotations from these educators.

Limitations of Available Information

Full and detailed information on the P/R manual practices of all American public colleges and universities has never been compiled and is not available. A number of the people whose input had been solicited wrote to say that they were uninformed on this subject. They were sorry that they could not be helpful. They expressed interest and a desire to learn what the research findings are. A professor of higher education wrote, "I will very much look forward to seeing the results of your research in print. "

One respondent wrote in part:

> I am afraid that with the exception of the first question (P/R manual a beneficial mechanism) I really am not in a position to answer the questions. If I did, it would be largely by guesswork.... I personally think that the development of an adequate policy regulation manual is highly desirable for most and probably all institutions.
>
> I would assume that a good many and perhaps most institutions have something comparable to a policy regulation manual. Again, I do not know firsthand.... I am sorry I can't be of more help.

The following partial quotation from a letter makes it clear that the letter writer has done some checking with his member institutions in an attempt to obtain information. His conclusion with which there probably is much disagreement is that all member institutions have policy/regulation manuals in use.

> Our response to the questionnaire for your research project entitled "The Use of Policy/Regulation Manuals in Public Higher Education" would be "yes" to both questions 1 and 2. (P/R manual is a beneficial mechanism and is general practice.) In checking with some of our membership institutions, it appears that they all have policy/regulations manuals in use. Several deans cited the legal protection which such manuals provide and the manuals appear to have been in place for the past ten to fifteen years. Most universities have developed their own systems, although many have used the manuals from other institutions as models.

Reports from Higher Education Association Executives

There were responses from twenty-four higher education association executives. While most consider the P/R manual a beneficial mechanism, they are not all of one mind. Their views span a broad range of opinion. One wrote, "I can't imagine any large or even small institutions operating without procedure manuals." At the other extreme is the association executive who is not prepared to accept the Policy/Regulation manual as a beneficial mechanism:

> All of the questions on this page assume that a manual is a beneficial mechanism. Without the option of considering either approaches to ensuring proper attention to policies and procedures, I find I'm unprepared to respond only on the question of manuals.

Of the twenty-four respondents, twenty-one (87.5%) are of the opinion that the policy/regulation manual is a beneficial mechanism. The remaining three respondents had some question about the value of P/R manuals.

As to whether the use of the P/R manual is general practice, fourteen higher education association executives expressed an affirmative opinion. Seven respondents questioned whether P/R manuals were general practice and three responded with "No." Since substantial evidence of general practice or nonuse of P/R manuals is not available, each respondent was actually expressing a judgement or opinion based on personal experience and observation.

Why P/R manuals are not general practice in some institutions is a moot issue. The higher education association executives expressed a variety of opinions. Their comments shed light on P/R manual practice.

One executive wrote a comprehensive statement which points to several basic problems in establishing and maintaining an effective P/R manual system:

> My impression is that while institutions see a manual as important, they have difficulty maintaining it on a consistent basis over time. To do so requires (a) a commitment by top management; (b) timely and consistent updating; (c) avoidance of excessively as "bureaucratic"; and (related to "a"), use of the written policies as the basis for management decisions. Also, managers who have a "seat-of-the-pants" style - that is, those who are probably not good managers - may feel constrained by a manual and therefore may not appreciate the benefits.

The following is quoted from a letter by an executive who is of the opinion that the use or nonuse of P/R manuals is primarily due to limitations of time and effort:

> We think the most important deterrent to institutions developing a manual is the time and effort required to do it, and we believe that if we give them a starting point by a model manual, it will speed up the process and enable them to move ahead.

Some respondents are of the opinion that nonuse and misuse of P/R manuals result from lack of understanding and skill. There is, wrote one, a "lack of training of how and when to use P/R manuals."

Another respondent attributed the nonuse of P/R manuals to the proclivity of academicians for nonconformity:

> Mainly afraid of strict codification of policy - they still want to "vague it."

Halfway measures are not enough, wrote this executive. He stated bluntly that unless the P/R manual is kept up-to-date, it is less than worthless:

> Critical area is maintenance of manual. If resources are not allocated to keep manual current and complete, it is less than worthless.

The critical factor, as perceived by one executive, is the presence of a firm and consistent administration. Use of the policy/regulation manual is general practice, he wrote, in public colleges and universities "with well coordinated central administative systems. On the other hand, use of the P/R manual is not general practice "when strong central administrations do not require it."

It is significant that none of the respondents indicated that there had been dissatisfaction with the benefits obtained from the use of P/R manuals. The reasons given for nonuse of P/R manuals appear to stem from the belief that P/R manuals just do not have enough value to justify the effort and cost.

More than half of the respondents (fourteen) believe that the use of policy/regulation manuals can be fostered by such means as publications, workshops, and presentations at conferences. Several executives reported that their higher education associations have provided such P/R manual services as conferences, workshops, consultant service, reference libraries and publications. Also, several executives indicated that their associations would consider providing these services if and as requested by member institutions.

Reports from Higher Education Authorities

Responses were received from sixty-one higher education authorities. Of the sixty-one respondents, eleven wrote that they were uninformed in the area of policy/regulation manuals. Of these eleven respondents, seven provided no information and four only partially completed the checklist. Several were apologetic. This note is typical: "I regret that I cannot be of help, but I simply have no information on the subject."

Two of the uninformed respondents hold senior level positions in the higher education coordinating agencies of their states (SHEEO). One wrote, "We have no information of any kind on which to base responses to your questions."

The other wrote:

> This is not a subject for which this Commission has responsibility and we are not in a position to provide any information on the public colleges and universities. I suggest that you contact each directly.

Several of the authorities made it clear that their statements simply reporesented their individual opinions. One wrote that he was offering his "surmise." Another said that the answers were based on his "impression." Another wrote, "Sorry, I am not sure about use and non use."

Most higher education authorities (forty-seven), like the higher education association executives, expressed the opinion that P/R manuals are a beneficial mechanism. Several authorities were emphatic about the importance of using P/R manuals. One wrote:

> ----they are an essential tool for smooth successful administration. Their use should be a requirement in all institutions of higher education, both public and private. (Underlining in original)

Another higher education authority asserted that laws in most states require written policities and regulations:

> State law in most states requires that Policies/Regulations be maintained in writing, and that they cover Personnel, Purchasing, Travel, Due Process, Relation with Students, etc. Federal Affirmative Action reviews also require written policies that have been disseminated to employees. The increase in size of higher education has made it more bureacratic. Policy manuals (in addition to the catalog) are a necessity for most institutions.

One advocate of policy/regulation manuals believes that in institutions that have not had effective P/R manual systems, "the potential for organizational chaos has been both persistent and high."

Another authority wrote to the present researcher:

> As President of a private university, I endorse a well thought out manual....This study has the potential for assistance in an area long neglected in both the public and private sectors....

But the higher education authorities also are not of one mind. There are those who give P/R manuals only limited approval and some who have no use for them.

A professor believes that the policy/regulation manual is a beneficial mechanism, but he is of the opinion that collective bargaining has eliminated much of the need for its use:

> A collectively bargained contract replaces P/R manual in many areas. In Minnesota, for example, the contract eliminates need for a manual.

The deputy commissioner for higher education of one state accepts the practice of codified manuals for separate areas, but he does not approve of the all inclusive single compilation manual: "A single compilation is unmanageable and not useful. Separate areas have codified practice."

In one state the commissioner for higher education does not believe that the policy/regulation manual is a beneficial mechanism or that its use is general practice. He asked,"What problems are your P/R manuals trying to solve?"

As though to answer the question, a professor of higher education wrote in part: "...A few years ago the University of Arkansas codified all of the policies passed by the Board of Trustees over the years so the Board could be consistent in its actions..."

And a former state university president believes that in these contentious times, an effective P/R policy manual is a must:

> "...Given todays union-oriented faculties, the tendency to sue an institution over the slightest alleged unfair treatment , the impact of Affirmative Action, etc., I believe it is imperative that an institution have a sound, logical, complete policy/regulation manual and keep it current.

Although it is the opinion of some authorities that P/R manuals are beneficial mechanisms and are general practice is most major state universities, these authorities believe that P/R manuals are not used in some institutions of higher education. The following comment was made be a former U.S. Office of Education Specialist.in College and University Administration: "Most main state universities and land-grant universities use manuals. This is not true generally, however, of state universities that were formerly teacher colleges."

The Executive Director of a mid-western state coordinating commission for postsecondary education made the same point: "The Technical Community Colleges are young organizations feeling their way. Only five years old, they do not have a felt need."

Of the sixty-one respondents, twenty-one are of the opinion that use of the P/R manual is general practice. Since forty-seven authorities are of the opinion that P/R manuals are a beneficial mechanism, obviously some of them doubt that this beneficial mechanism has become general practice. One reason is that some administrators do not know much about P/R manuals. One authority expressed the opinion, "Many academic administrators have little knowledge of useful management practices."

Moreover, even when the use of a P/R manual has been established as general practice in an institution, some staff members may disregard the policies and regulations of the P/R manual. One long time observer of the higher education scene expressed the problem this way: "Even when manuals are provided, personnel will not take the time or trouble to follow or observe the policies or regulations set forth is the manuals."

An authority who holds a faculty position made a similar comment: "The manual exists, but no one uses it. Most of the time faculty are kept ignorant of all policy, except for selected personnel policy." (underlining in original).

Of the sixty-one higher education authorities who responded, thirty-four believe that the use of policy/regulation manuals can be fostered by such means as publications, workshops, presentations at conferences, etc. No doubt these educational activities can be helpful. How effective these programs are is affected by such factors as motivation, enthusiasm and sense of value. One authority made the observation that it is leadership that makes the differences. "I would think that one would find the "exemplary" examples of policy/regulation manuals in institutions having dynamic, well-trained presidents/leaders who would see the desirability for having such manuals."

The Connecticut Board of Higher Education has not had a P/R manual, "detailing procedures and requirements for the institutions it coordinates." This situations is expected to change following the appointment of a new Commissioner of Higher Education. A senior level member of the staff made the following anticipatory statement in February, 1982:

> It is expected that an effort will begin shortly to review existing Board procedures and policies under the direction of Dr. Glasgow, who recently (Sept. 1981) assumed the position of Commissioner of Higher Education. A logical outcome of that effort would be the issuance of a P/R manual.

Maintaining a P/R manual on an up-to-date basis is a problem for many institutions. The P/R manuals are not kept up-to-date on an ongoing basis. In one middle Atlantic state, the manual of the Board of State College and University Directors is revised every three or four years. Updating the outdated manual is a project that requires months to complete.

It is clear that the development of a P/R manual is not an isolated event.. To be effective, use of the P/R manual must be an ongoing process. This authority expressed it very well:

> The existence of the manual is only the first step. Structures must be created to assure that they are used in decision making and not just to justify preconceived notions. Also policy must be drawn up in advance of its need. Most of the time we wait until a crisis arises to develop an ex post facto policy. (Underlining in original).

Reports from Higher Education Administrators

Responses were received from eighty-one higher education administrators. From the institutions which were using a P/R manual, the objective was to learn about the features of the various P/R manuals. From the institutions which were not using a P/R manual, the objective was to learn the reasons why.

The features most frequently provided in the P/R manual are:

> The P/R manual includes policies and regulations on all aspects of college operations.
>
> Contents of the manual are arranged according to some system of codification.
>
> There is a table of contents.
>
> There is an index.
>
> The manual is revised from time to time as needed.
>
> The manual format is loose leaf so that pages can be revised, removed, or added as action or developments take place.
>
> There is a definite list of repositories to which the P/R manual documents are distributed (offices, libraries, etc.) and where P/R information can be obtained.
>
> New or revised P/R manual pages are distributed as soon as possible after action is taken.

> The source (board, official, statute, contract, or judicial decision) and date of action are identified.
>
> Responsibility for updating and distributing manual materials is definitely assigned. If assigned, please give name and title of assignee

Various reasons were offered for not using a P/R manual. The basic reason is that use of a P/R manual is not considered beneficial enough to justify the time and expense. There is little criticism or dissatisfac- based on experience with P/R manuals. It is simply that the policy makers of the institutions did not give the P/R manual a high priority rating.

It makes a significant difference if the top management believes P/R manuals have a great deal of value. Like other programs, P/R manuals will blossom with leadership support and will wither without it. The persons in leadership positions can determine whether P/R manuals are developed and whether the manuals will be used effectively.

The chancellor of a state college system in the northeast believes in the value of P/R manuals. As a college president, he gave leadership to the development of an effective P/R manual. When he moved to a new position, he provided leadership to the development of a P/R manual system.

The chancellor of a southern university system made this candid comment:

> The document in question is Policies, Board of Regents. It is poorly arranged and is not up-to-date. A complete revision is under way.

There is reason to have confidence that this chancellor is providing leadership and that the needed improvements will be made..

Findings and Conclusions

The prevailing judgment of authorities in the field of higher education is that a P/R manual system is a beneficial mechanism that promotes effective governance in higher education.

A P/R manual system can facilitate communication, provide guidelines for due process, expedite decision making, and promote high personnel morale. Indeed, authorities have used strong language to advocate P/R manual systems.

A P/R manual system is general practice in public colleges and universities where the administration gives the P/R manual high priority and provides leadership.

The consequences of not having a P/R manual are dismal because "the potential for organizational chaos has been both persistent and high." In attempting to cope with the chaos, numerous P/R manuals have been created.

A significant finding of the present research which has seldom received notice is that P/R manuals have frequently been ineffective. The blunt fact is that P/R manuals have often been ignored or unused.

One reason for this sorry state of affairs is the low quality of many of the manuals. Frequently the manuals are poorly arranged. There is little editing of content and it is difficult to locate needed information. A very serious problem is obsolescence. There is much evidence of serious time lags in updating the content of manuals. The information contained in a manual cannot be relied on because it is inaccurate and incomplete. To make matters worse, it is often difficult to locate a copy of the manual.

The second reason that P/R manuals are ineffective can be called the academic syndrome. Many academicians are accustomed to and prefer to "vague it." They have not developed the habit of searching the manual to obtain official policy/regulation information or to learn the approved procedures. Furthermore, when it is hard to locate a copy of the manual and if the manual is out-of-date and poorly arranged, academicians see no value in making the manual search a ritual.

The conclusion that must be drawn from the data is that although a P/R manual is an essential mechanism for effective, efficient governance, it is not a panacea. In order to realize the potential benefits, required characteristics and features must be provided. It is not enough to have a P/R manual. The manual must be carefully arranged and edited, kept up-to-date, and be readily accessible to all. Only after the requirements for a well organized, well edited, up-to-date governance manual have been met, can the institutions reap the benefits of a P/R manual system.

Educational Importance of This Research

The use or non use of a policy/regulations manual system is not a matter of time and money. A P/R manual system does not take more time and money than the hodgepodge of bulletins and handbooks that is the practice in numerous colleges and universities. It requires only a relatively minor redeployment in the overall allocation of time and money. If the time and money wasted because of avoidable misunderstandings, grievances, and controversies are included in the calculations, an effective P/R manual system probably requires less time and money.

What is needed is for higher education executives to be convinced that it is as essential to have an effective P/R manual system as it is to have an effective accounting system. When this is accomplished, effective P/R manual systems will be instituted. This will make it possible to replace the "disorganized hodgepodge of laws, proclamations, policies" existing in some institutions with P/R manuals that "bring order and accountability to the acts of governance and administration." This research seeks to contribute to that goal.

There are signs of growing interest in the use of P/R manual systems in public colleges and universities. Several college administrators have announced plans to establish P/R manuals. Revision of P/R manuals is under way in a number of institutions. Executives of two of the larger higher education associations have expressed much interest in this research. One wrote that he will be calling me. "I want to see the results." The other stated, "We would appreciate keeping in touch with your work."

These and other events are indications that the effective use of P/R manuals is an idea whose time has come!